



Executive Summary Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Program

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Georgia
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Introduction:

To ensure taxpayer dollars are making the greatest impact on public safety while reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders, Georgia allocates a portion of state and federal resources for effective community-based programs as alternatives to out-of-home placements for juvenile offenders. By “focusing out-of-home placements on serious, higher-risk offenders and providing the opportunity to reinvest a portion of the savings into effective community-based programs and practices which are more likely to reduce recidivism¹,” Georgia increases public safety through a more effective juvenile system.

Background:

In 2012, former Governor Nathan Deal charged Georgia’s Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform to study Georgia’s criminal justice system and recommend policy changes with the end goal of increasing public safety through a more effective juvenile system. On December 18, 2012, the Council released their second report. Per the recommendations of the report, during the 2013 legislative session, former Governor Deal signed into law House Bill 242, landmark legislation that would improve Georgia’s juvenile justice system through innovative practices and methods proven to yield positive results. At that time, former Governor Deal and the Georgia General Assembly appropriated resources to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) for the purpose of creating effective community programs to serve youth who were currently being committed to the Georgia’s Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and/or served through out-of-home placements as a sanction. CJCC manage funding and technical support for juvenile courts to deliver evidence-based treatment programming for juvenile offenders in their home communities.

Objective:

The Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Program (JJIG) aims to develop and sustain programs that address the criminogenic needs of youth while mitigating risk of future offending.

Process:

The JJIG offers funding and technical support for a set of nationally recognized treatment programs. Counties who are not funded through the JJIG are provided evidence-based programs

¹ Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform for Georgians. (2012). *Report of the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform for Georgians*. Atlanta, Georgia.
https://dcs.georgia.gov/sites/dcs.georgia.gov/files/related_files/site_page/Report-Special-Council-Criminal-Justice-Final.pdf

(EBPs) slots through DJJ. These slots are available to youth who meet the same program requirements but are not adjudicated in one of the active JJIG counties. An appropriate youth must receive a delinquent adjudication and score moderate to high-risk on the Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment (PDRA). The PDRA was adopted for use in Georgia in 2014, and is designed to measure a youth’s risk of recidivating. The assessment criterion reflects the JJIG’s focus on delinquent youth who may face out-of-home placement. The treatment programs have been deemed “promising” and “effective” at addressing the criminogenic needs of youth by crimesolutions.gov, an evidence-based program registry sponsored by the National Institute of Justice and Office of Justice Programs. Allowable treatment programs funded by the JJIG include: Aggression Replacement Training; Botvin LifeSkills Training; Brief Strategic Family Therapy; Connections Wraparound; Functional Family Therapy; Multi-Dimensional Family Therapy; Multisystemic Therapy; and Thinking for a Change. National research findings indicate two primary drivers of program effectiveness in reducing juvenile recidivism: delinquency risk and implementation quality.

Programs that prioritize services for high-risk youth and maintain better implementation quality, including fidelity to a given program model, yield the best outcomes. Per the expertise of Georgia’s Model Fidelity Coordinator, fidelity to program model integrity includes three parts: training of staff, supervision and coaching of staff, and adherence to Principles of Effective Intervention. Georgia’s CJCC is committed to assisting JJIG Grantees with the implementation of EBPs through coaching and feedback on model fidelity and general programmatic operations.

Results:

Since 2012, each year Georgia has reduced out-of-home placements by over 50% in Incentive Grant recipient counties. The program has spanned across the state serving a minimum of 34 counties annually. During the first year of the JJIG, 1,122 youth were served through EBPs, and by the fifth year, the number of youth served increased to 1,390 youth.

**Out-of-Home Placement (OHP) Reduction Targets and Outcomes
over Five Implementation Years**

	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
FY 2012 Baseline – Total OHP	2,603	2,664	2,616	2,513	2,552
Reduction Target of OHP	15%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Percent Reduction Achieved	62%	54%	53%	56%	57%
Total Out-of-Home Placements	989	1,227	1,238	1,099	1,109
Implementation Period	9 months	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months
Number of Grantee Courts	29 courts	29 courts	28 courts	25 courts	26 courts
Number of Counties Served	49 counties	51 counties	48 counties	34 counties	37 counties
Number of Youth Served	1,122	1,666	1,723	1,465	1,390

For More Information:

The Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Program Yearly Evaluation Reports are available electronically at: <https://cjcc.georgia.gov/juvenile-justice-incentive-grant-program-0>